

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/EE:RAMOSHER:LM
APPROVED BY D-WARREN CHRISTOPHER
EUR:JAARMITAGE
D/HA - PATT DERIAN
S/S - MR. REDDY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SOFIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 091903

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, CGEN, PFOR, BU (MAREVA, RUMYANKA AND YORDANKA)

SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH MAREVS,
APRIL 19

1. IN RESPONSE TO EARLIER REQUEST FROM MAREVS FOR MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY, DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER RECEIVED MR. AND MRS. MAREV ON APRIL 19. ALSO PRESENT WERE DEPARTMENT'S COORDINATOR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND UMANITARIAN AFFAIRS PATRICIA DERIAN, AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE (EUR).

2. DEPUTY SECRETARY BEGAN BY EXPRESSING HIS ADMIRATION FOR MAREV'S STAMINA AND PERSEVERANCE. HE THEN ASKED ARMITAGE TO SUMMARIZE DEVELOPMENTS IN CASE TO DATE. ARMITAGE EMPHASIZED THAT OUR OBJECTIVE NOW WAS TO FIND APPROACH TO BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES WHICH WOULD MAKE IT MOST DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO SAY NO, AND AS EASY AS CONFIDENTIAL

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POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO AGREE TO RELEASE THE CHILDREN. THE USG SEES MAREVS' PROBLEM AS CLASSIC DIVIDED FAMILY CASE UNDER TERMS OF CSCE AND SEES REUNITING MAREV FAMILY AS TOTALLY NATURAL AND HUMANITARIAN THING TO DO. ARMITAGE REFERRED TO CHRISTOPHER'S FEBRUARY 16 MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR POPOV WHEN WE WERE FIRST TOLD THAT

CHILDREN DID NOT WANT TO COME TO THE US. WE THEN ASKED IF THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD ALLOW MRS. MAREV TO RETURN TO BULGARIA, ON US PASSPORT OF COURSE, IN ORDER

TO MEET WITH CHILDREN. ARMITAGE THEN OUTLINED PROPOSED SCENARIO FOR MRS. MAREV'S TRAVEL TO BULGARIA AND SPECIFIED ASSURANCES TO BE OBTAINED FROM BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT BEFORE TRIP WOULD TAKE PLACE AND ROLE AMBASSADOR AND EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE PREPARED TO PLAY TO HAVE SOME AMERICAN WITH HER DURING HER STAY. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT MAREVS HAD EXPRESSED RELUCTANCE REGARDING MRS. MAREV GOING TO BULGARIA EVEN UNDER CONDITIONS HE HAD DESCRIBED. REFERRING TO HIS RECENT CONVERSATION WITH MAREVS, ARMITAGE EMPHASIZED THAT DECISION IS COMPLETELY MAREVS' OWN BUT THAT DEPARTMENT MUST PROVIDE THEM WITH BEST POSSIBLE ADVICE AND THAT, REGARDLESS OF THEIR DECISION, DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO DO EVERYTHING IT CAN TO REUNITE FAMILY.

3. DEPUTY SECRETARY REEMPHASIZED THAT DECISION WAS ENTIRELY FOR MAREVS TO MAKE. HE SAID THAT IF MRS. MAREV AGREED TO TRAVEL TO BULGARIA, THE USG WOULD AFFORD HER ALL POSSIBLE RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION, AND CITED AGAIN THE PRECAUTIONS AND ASSURANCES WE INTENDED TO SECURE. DEPUTY SECRETARY ADMITTED THAT IT WAS NOT A "ZERO RISK" PROPOSAL, BUT EVALUATED RISK AS VERY LOW BECAUSE OF CONSEQUENCES FOR BULGARIANS IF THEY VIOLATED THEIR ASSURANCES TO US. CHRISTOPHER STRESSED THAT USG WOULD NOT "WASH ITS HANDS" OF MAREV'S CASE IF MRS. MAREV CHOSE NOT TO GO, AND THAT WE WOULD CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTINUE TO ASSIST THEM IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE. HE URGED THEM TO RECONSIDER VERY SERIOUSLY MRS. MAREV'S POSSIBLE TRAVEL.

4. MRS. MAREV STATED THAT WHEN TRIP HAD FIRST BEEN SUGGESTED ON DECEMBER 10, THEY HAD SAID "MAYBE," BUT NOW FIVE MONTHS HAD PASSED. IN THAT TIME SHE HAD BEEN TOLD BY GIRLS ON TELEPHONE APPROXIMATELY TWO MONTHS AGO THAT SOME MEN HAD COME TO THEIR SCHOOL AND TOLD THEM THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO JOIN THEIR PARENTS IN THE US. GIRLS HAD SAID THAT THEIR LETTERS CAME BACK BECAUSE THEIR PARENTS WERE NOT IN CHICAGO, BUT MRS. MAREV INSISTED THEY STILL GET MAIL IN CHICAGO AND HAVE SOME ONE THERE WHO PICKS UP THEIR LETTERS FOR THEM. THE GIRLS SAID THEY WANTED TO COME TO THE US, BUT NOW THE BULGARIANS SAY THAT THEY DON'T WANT TO COME. MRS. MAREV DECLARED THAT IF BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD GIVE THEM PASSPORTS, THEY WOULD COME; IF THEY THEN ARE

NOT HAPPY HERE, THEY CAN GO BACK TO BULGARIA AND NOBODY WILL MAKE THEM STAY. SHE ADDED THAT BULGARIANS STOPPED ALL CORRESPONDENCE MONTHS AGO, AND SINCE THEN SHE HAD RECEIVED ONLY ONE LETTER, FROM HER MOTHER-IN-LAW. SHE HAD ALREADY TOLD THE BULGARIAN EMBASSY THAT SHE WAS NOT

GOING TO GO.

5. CHRISTOPHER NOTED THAT WHEN AMBASSADOR POPOV TOLD HIM DURING THEIR MEETING THAT CHILDREN DID NOT WANT TO COME TO THE U.S., WE HAD TO COUNTER THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT SOMEHOW. THEREFORE WE ASKED IF BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD ALLOW MRS. MAREV TO RETURN TO BULGARIA TO MEET WITH HER DAUGHTERS. IF THE CHILDREN WERE TO SAY TO THEIR MOTHER, IN THE PRESENCE OF AN AMERICAN EMBASSY OFFICIAL, THAT THEY DID WANT TO COME TO THE U.S. THEN IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT NOT TO RELEASE THE CHILDREN. MR. MAREV INTERJECTED
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THAT BULGARIANS DID NOT SHOW THE CHILDREN PASSPORTS WHEN THEY "ASKED" THEM IF THEY WANTED TO COME TO THE U.S. HE WONDERED WHO HAD ASKED THE CHILDREN WHETHER THEY WANTED TO COME HERE. DEPUTY SECRETARY REPLIED THAT AMBASSADOR POPOV CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN TOLD THIS BY THOSE WHO CARE FOR THE CHILDREN.

6. MRS. MAREV COMMENTED THAT NO ONE WAS THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN. NO ONE KNOWS HOW THEY GOT INTO ORPHANAGE SCHOOL, BUT FIRST THE OLDEST AND THEN THE YOUNGEST WERE PLACED IN IT. SHE CONTINUED THAT BULGARIANS HAD SAID CHILDREN WERE ABANDONED, BUT HOW WERE THEY ABANDONED? THEY WERE NOT SIMPLY FOUND IN THE STREET, BUT WERE LEFT WITH THEIR GRANDMOTHER. SHE RECOUNTED THAT, FIRST, BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES HAD SAID THEY KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THE CASE; THEN THEY CLAIMED NO ONE HAD ASKED THE CHILDREN TO COME TO THE U.S.; THEN THEY TELL US WE ARE FREE TO RETURN TO BULGARIA; NOW THEY TELL US THAT THE CHILDREN DON'T WANT TO COME. THEY SAID THAT THE CHILDREN WERE ABANDONED AND THAT HER HUSBAND IS A CRIMINAL WHO HOLDS HER HERE. SHE STATED THAT SHE TOLD BULGARIAN EMBASSY THAT THERE WAS "NO CHAIN" AROUND HER NECK AND THAT SHE HAD BEEN FREE TO GO ANYTIME BUT DID NOT WANT TO GO. SHE ALSO TOLD BULGARIANS THAT THE CHILDREN WANTED TO COME AND INFORMED THEM ABOUT A LETTER FROM HER OLDEST DAUGHTER IN 1974, WHICH DESCRIBED THEIR "PRISONERS' LIFE" IN SCHOOL, BEATINGS, LACK OF VACATIONS AND BIRTHDAY PARTIES. SHE HAD ASKED BULGARIAN EMBASSY WHY CHILDREN WOULD WISH TO STAY UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.

7. CHRISTOPHER POINTED OUT THAT MRS. MAREV'S PRESENCE IN BULGARIA AND HER MEETING WITH CHILDREN WOULD GIVE US OPPORTUNITY TO CHALLENGE BULGARIAN STATEMENTS AND PROVE THEM FALSE. DERIAN NOTED THAT WITH OUTLINED PRECAUTIONS INVOLVING ESCORTING EMBASSY OFFICER,
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THERE WAS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF ANY INCIDENT. SHE SAID THAT MRS. MAREV, AS THE CHILDREN'S MOTHER, WITH HER LOVE AND CONCERN FOR THEM, HAD RIGHTS REGARDING CHILDREN WHICH WERE RECOGNIZED AROUND THE WORLD. IT IS VERY DIFFICULT, DERIAN SAID, FOR GOVERNMENTS TO SAY NO UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. SHE POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE VERY FEW DIVIDED FAMILY CASES LEFT IN BULGARIA; -- THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT HAD SHOWN THAT IT CAN BE PERSUADED, AND VISIT SEEMED TO BE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO RESOLVE THIS CASE. SHE EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING FOR MRS. MAREV'S ANGER AND HURT, AS WELL AS DISTRUST OF BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT, AND NOTED THAT IF MRS. MAREV WENT TO BULGARIA, THIS WOULD FORCE BULGARIANS TO REACT TO HER PRESENCE. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY ADDED THAT BOTH HE AND MS. DERIAN WANTED TO SEE FAMILY REUNITED ALMOST AS MUCH AS MAREVS THEMSELVES. HE NOTED THAT PERHAPS DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN TOO MUCH THE ADVOCATE OF A TRIP BY MRS. MAREV, BUT WE DO SEE IT AS BEST OPPORTUNITY FOR REUNITING THE FAMILY. HE ASSURED MAREVS OF HIS DEEP AND EARNEST INTEREST AND THAT WHATEVER THE FAMILY DECIDED, THE USG WOULD CONTINUE TO HELP.

8. DERIAN REFERRED TO MAY 20 HEARING IN VARNA AND OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT IT IS TO ESTABLISH BASIS FOR GUARDIANSHIP OVER THE CHILDREN. SHE ADVISED MAREVS THAT ZHELEZOV (MRS. MAREV'S BROTHER) HAD VISITED US EMBASSY TO ASK HOW TO REACH MAREVS, SINCE THEY WERE NOT IN CHICAGO, AND TO OFFER TO HELP IN THIS MATTER. OUR EMBASSY WAS UNSURE AS TO MAREVS' WISHES IN THIS RESPECT AND DID NOT HAVE WASHINGTON ADDRESS IN ANY CASE. NOTING THAT MR. ARMITAGE COULD DISCUSS QUESTION OF THE HEARING IN GREATER DETAIL WITH THEM, DERIAN SAID SHE WAS CERTAIN THAT MAREVS REALIZED THAT IF BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT BECOMES GUARDIAN, UNDER THEIR LAWS, IT WOULD MAKE CASE MORE DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE. AT THIS POINT, MR. MAREV DESPAIRED OF EVER GETTING CONFIDENTIAL

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HIS CHILDREN TO US AND EXPRESSED FEAR THAT IF HIS WIFE WERE TO RETURN TO BULGARIA, HIS FAMILY WOULD BE EVEN MORE PERMANENTLY DIVIDED. HE NOTED THAT HE HAD BEEN DEMONSTRATING FOR EIGHT MONTHS WHILE BULGARIANS WERE "PREPARING" CHILDREN ON WHAT TO SAY. LAST FALL,

HE SAID, HE HAD BEEN TOLD IT WOULD TAKE THREE TO SIX MONTHS; NOW SIX MONTHS HAD PASSED. HOW MANY MORE MONTHS COULD IT TAKE?

9. CHRISTOPHER EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL SORROW OVER DIFFICULTIES CASE PRESENTED. HE NOTED THAT IT WAS

ESPECIALLY TROUBLESOME NOW THAT BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT CLAIMED CHILDREN DID NOT WANT TO COME TO THE US, AND THAT THEREFORE IT MIGHT NOW TAKE QUITE A WHILE LONGER TO RESOLVE. DERIAN AGAIN URGED MAREVS TO RECONSIDER PROPOSED TRIP TO BULGARIA AND EMPHASIZED TO MAREVS THAT BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE SAID CHILDREN DO NOT WISH TO LEAVE IN HOPES MAREVS WILL GIVE UP. CHRISTOPHER AND DERIAN AGAIN STATED THAT USG WOULD DO EVERYTHING IT COULD TO PROTECT MRS. MAREV. THEY NOTED THAT WITH BELGRADE CSCE FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE COMING, BULGARIANS WANTED TO HAVE A GOOD RECORD. DERIAN ALSO ASKED THAT MAREVS TELL US OF ANYTHING ELSE THEY FEEL WE MIGHT DO TO PROTECT MRS. MAREV WHICH WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR HER TO AGREE TO GO, SUGGESTING THAT WE COULD HAVE AN OFFICER ESCORT MRS. MAREV FROM HER "DOORSTEP" AND BACK AGAIN. MRS. MAREV SEEMED TO REACT WELL TO THIS LAST SUGGESTION, BUT ONLY AGREED TO CONSIDER VISIT FURTHER AND TO ADVISE US OF ANY OTHER PRECAUTIONS WHICH WOULD MAKE HER FEEL MORE SECURE.

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